

THE HILL-TRIBES OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF ASSAM;—by REV.
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The Himalaya mountains, so far as they form the northern boundary of Assam, are inhabited by two distinct races of men. Originally, probably one and the same race, they seem to have undergone a change sufficiently marked to authorize their being considered at the present moment, as two distinct races.

The mountaineers who occupy the eastern half of those frontier-hills seem to be original occupants, or first arrivals, and to have retained their original habits and customs. Those who live to the west, appear to belong to a later period of immigration, subsequent to their descent from Central Asia. When they drove out from before them the first occupants, say the Dimasa and Boro, or Lalong, now living in the plains of Assam, they seem to have come in contact with a certain degree of civilization which effected that change both of feature and habits and customs which is so striking to the beholder.

The last mentioned of these two races are the people commonly called Butias or Butanese—this name applying to all the various and numerous tribes who belong to the same race. These, however, having served our purpose thus far, we may leave for the present, while we turn our attention more in particular to their less civilized brethren to the east.

Unlike the Butias, these possess no common name. The region they occupy, is fully as large as Butan, and equally as interesting. Indeed, little as we know of the people, the country they occupy, is still less known: as much a *terra incognita*, in fact, as the interior of Africa. The few Europeans who have crossed the frontier, have barely done more than skirted this unknown region: none have ever penetrated to the snowy range; none ever crossed its entire width from Assam to Tibet proper. All we know about the country and its inhabitants, we have learnt from the latter, who are, however, not in all cases reliable informants. Until, therefore, a Livingstone or a Wilcox will undertake to traverse its cane-bridged mountain

torrents, its snow-capped heights, and brave leeches, dum-dam and cannibal Abors,—in order to confirm or otherwise, the statements of native informants,—we shall have to rest satisfied with our present stock of information.

From all, then, we have hitherto been able to collect, it would appear, that that portion of the Eastern Himalayas which lies between the $92^{\circ} 40'$ and $95^{\circ} 30'$ East Long., or between the eastern boundary line of the country of the Tauwang and Kampá Butias, and the Dibong river,—having Assam on its south, and Tibet proper on its north side,—constitutes the home of four peoples, known to the inhabitants of Assam by the names of Aka, Miji, Dafla, and Abor.

Three of these tribes, the Aka, Miji and Dafla, occupy the hills on the southern side of the backbone of the Himalayas, the snowy range. The water of their rivers flows down into Assam *direct*. I make use of the expression *direct*, because I thereby wish to explain the more immediate proximity of their mountain-homes to Assam; for, properly speaking, the rivers that run down the northern slopes of the snowy range pour their waters likewise into the same big river which passes through Assam, viz. the Sampo of Tibet. The Abors alone, in some of their northern clans, are said to dwell on both sides of the snowy mountains, and they are thus in intercourse both with Tibet and Assam.

The seats of these four principal tribes may be defined as follows: commencing from the west or the frontier of Butan we come first upon the Akas. Their country is situated so as to have Assam on the south, Butan on the west, the Miji territory on the north, and the Dafla east. The Buruli river forms the boundary of the Aka and Dafla country, or rather hills. The Mijis again have Butan to the west, and probably north, but the Buruli river running round the northern side of their country until it enters Butan, the Daflas to the east, and their friends and neighbours, the Akas to the south.

The Daflas like the Akas have the valley of Assam for their southern limit, the Akas and Mijis, with the Buruli river intervening, on their west, and the Abors both north and east,—the Subonsiri river running up between the hills of the Abors and Daflas. Then the Abors themselves occupy the whole of the remaining ex-

tremity of the eastern Himalayas. They inhabit all the country lying between the territories of the Daflas on the southern face of the snowy range, and the Kambo-Butias on the northern face of the same snowy ridge; Tibet on the north, Assam on the south, and the Mishmi-tribes on the east, the Dibong river forming the line of demarkation between the villages of the Abors and Mishmis.

Of all the four tribes above enumerated, the Abors are by far the most important, both as to their numerical strength and their war-like propensities, as well as through the extent of their territory.

In the present communication I shall restrict my remarks to one of the tribes only, namely—

The Akas.

The Akas or Angkas live on hills of moderate height, the highest probably not exceeding 6,000 feet, in the angle formed, as before mentioned, by Assam and Butan. Three to four days climbing over thickly wooded hills, nearly pathless, stumbling up the dry bed of the Buruli and other less important watercourses, thickly strown with large boulders, clambering up the steep faces of rocks, holding on by a cane-rope, bring the traveller to the small settlement of the Akas. The Miri elephant-hunters follow up the bed of the Buruli river, taking a small light boat along with them, which they lift over the water-falls, and so reach the Aka country. There is, however, a better road but somewhat circuitous. This road takes the traveller first to Butan to the settlement of the Sat-rajas due north, after a march of about four days, and then goes on to the Aka country due east which you reach in another two days. This is a road which the Aka women and children, and their ponies travel.

The name Aka, or Angka,—even Angka—is given to them by their neighbours; they themselves do not use it, but speak of themselves as Hrusso.

The Hrusso do not pretend to be aborigines of the country they now inhabit. They are unable to tell where the real home of their tribe is. They pretend to have been inhabitants of the plains. Our ancestors, they say, lived in Partabgor on the banks of the Giladhari river, north of Bishmath, but were driven out from thence by Krishna and Bolorám.

The language of the Aka, however, tells a tale, and so does their national character. Their language contains more words which can be traced to the valleys south of the Patkoi range, joining the Shan and Manipuri countries, than words indicating a closer affinity with the Dafla and Abor tribes. They differ mentally and physically from their mountain neighbours to the same degree.

The truth seems to be, that the Hrusso entered Assam about the same period when the far more numerous and daring Ahoms burst from their hills into the valley. Probably the Akas preceded them, and having been driven from place to place, they finally settled on the hills where they now still live. As to numerical importance, the Angkas would barely deserve any notice at all. They do not number more than one thousand souls.

This handful of hill people live in two detached villages. The greater one is inhabited by Akas who have earned for themselves the *sobriquet* of cotton thieves, or Kapás-chor. The smaller is peopled by a less offensive clan called the Hazarikhuka, or breakfast-eaters.

There is a third class of Angkas spoken of by the people of the plains who go by the name of Angka Miris. Old maps have them located beyond the snowy range on the Tibet side. But by all accounts, these Angka Miris live to the east of the Kapás-chor Angkas. The Miris of the plains who are in the habit of hunting for elephants, deny having ever heard of Angka Miris. Further enquiry, however, may enable me to throw more light upon this tribe.

The importance which attaches to the Akas is first the bad name which they bear among the people of the valley, who inhabit the tracts of country bordering on the Aka hills. For the Akas, few as they are in number, make up for this deficiency by being bold and daring robbers and cut-throats. Next in importance is their situation between the people of the valley of Assam and the powerful and very numerous clans of the Miji tribe. The Mijis, it would seem, are not in the habit of visiting Assam, except only one small chief; but they highly prize the silk and cotton cloth the Akas are able to procure from the plains, and for which these demand from the Mijis exorbitant prices. As a third cause of their importance may be adduced the fact that, although powerless themselves, they know how to make themselves formidable,

through the influence they manage to exercise over the Mijis, whose countless hosts they would be able without much difficulty to lead any day against any foe.

There are about ten clans for which the term households, or families, would be the more appropriate one to use; yet each of these petty clans has a chief whom they style Raja, like their neighbours, the Butias,—not Gam, like their other neighbours, the Daflas.

These clans are so small, that they find room each in a house by themselves. Some clans number only thirty souls, others sixty to one hundred, and according to the number of inmates is the size of each house. The most numerous clan boasts of a chief, who is but too well known among the Assamese, and the neighbouring hillmen, and no doubt the Bengal Government too has learnt to know his name. This is Tagi Raja. This man has succeeded in obtaining the hegemony over all the Kopás-chor Akas, and as he exercises great influence over the Mijis also, he is able to intimidate the rest of the Aka people, and thus may be said to be the head of all the Hrusso.

The Hazarikhuka Akas live in three clans on a separate hill from the Tagi's people.

Internal feuds are numerous. It is a matter of no rare occurrence to see clan against clan, *i. e.* family against family enlist the aid of the Mijis and carry on a miniature warfare.

The Hrusso use the cross-bow and poisoned arrows; a light spear for the purposes of throwing, and a narrow sword, about four feet long. They manufacture their own arms; the iron and steel, however, they buy in Assam. They use neither shield nor helmet. Their tactics are simple; like all the hill-tribes, they rely upon sudden surprise, they lie in ambush and fall upon their foes unawares.

The Assamese Buruas of the days of the native rulers used the Akas for purposes of revenge and intrigue. And it was through the party-spirit of one of the Buruas, or governors of Chardoar in the days of Gaurinath, the last real king of Assam, that the Akas obtained the privilege of levying pieces of Eria silk (Bambyz), and cotton cloth from every household in the Balipara mehal, which they continue to do unto this day. The only occasion on which the Akas have come

into hostile collision with the present government of Assam, occurred some twenty-five years ago when their daring raids led to the capture of the young Tagi Raja and, after his liberation, to the massacre of the garrison of a stockade close to the pass which leads into their hills.

All attempts to punish this bold and blackguardly act remained unsuccessful, at last the little war seems not to have been carried on with much spirit, and matters between the Hrusso and the British Government were left in *statu quo*.

Since that revengeful and treacherous act, however, the Akas have been content to levy their silk and cotton pieces, and to accept Rs. 860 of black mail per annum, without any further deeds of robbery and murder.

They now pay their annual visit to Assam in the months of February and March; take their due; make their purchases in iron, steel and brass vessels, in beads and other articles of luxury, and, after the above mentioned levying of cloth, return the way they came.

The Aka, though uncivilized, is not devoid of religious ideas. He has no written castras or religious books of any kind, it is true; he has no system of religion and knows nothing of caste. But the Aka fears the high mountains which tower aloft over his dwelling, and from the snow-clad sides of which leaps the thundering avalanche; he fears the roaring torrents of the deep glen which interposes between him and his friends beyond; and he fears the dark and dense jungles in which his cattle lose their way.

These dark and threatening powers of nature, he invests with supernatural attributes. They are his gods. Thus there is *Fuxu*, the god of jungle and water; *Firan* and *Siman*, the gods of war, and *Satu*, the god of house and field.

Over all these gods the modern Aka places *Hori Deo*, a Hindu deity. This is an innovation, introduced by Tagi Raja after his imprisonment. For whilst a captive, he became a disciple, as it were, of a Hindu guru, who in his turn obliged Tagi, by giving security for his new convert's future good behaviour.

All these gods have their little temples or rather puja-huts, which contain representations of them, some are said to be of silver and gold. These latter most probably would turn out to be Buddhist images, obtained from the Butias.

Near the puja-houses lives the Deori or sacrificing priest. He is always chosen from among the other Akas by divine tokens, it does not matter whether he is a bachelor or married. This Deori has to perform the daily worship for all the people, and on all special occasions he has to sacrifice the requisite number of mithuns, cows, goats, fowls and pigeons. Geese and ducks there are none to be found in all the settlements of either Aka or Miji. The Akas entertain some crude notions of a state of punishment and reward after death.

To follow an Aka through his domestic and public life, I shall have to begin with the erection of the dwelling-house. The Hrusso cannot build a house where he pleases, for the spot on which he intends to erect his future dwelling must first be ascertained to be a lucky spot. The Deori therefore has to be consulted, animals slain as sacrifices, and the place pronounced to be propitious. Then the felling of timber, and the collecting of the other building materials may be proceeded with. All having been collected, *Fuxu* receives his offerings, part of which consist in a portion of the building materials.

The house itself is generally very substantially constructed. It is built on piles from 5 to 7 feet above the ground; boarded and comfortably walled in, with carefully planed planks, in this respect resembling the houses of the Kassias. The roof is thatched with a kind of broad leaf, and on account of the strong winds, mats are firmly, but neatly, fastened all over it. The houses of the Daflas and Abors, including other hill-tribes besides, are less substantially constructed.

All the members of one family or clan, including the slaves, live under the same roof. The size of an Aka dwelling varies therefore with the size of the family. The house of Tagi Raja is 200 feet long and 40 feet broad, a long row of separate compartments running the whole length of the building.

No earthen vessels are used by the Aka for household purposes. They possess huge copper jars to hold the water supplies of the family, and for cooking and eating, they use the brass pots and plates which they obtain in the Tezapore bazar.

The copper jars are not procured by them in Assam, but most likely bartered from the Mijis, who again must have brought them from Butan. The granaries and stables are always built at some distance from the dwelling house for fear of fire.

The Akas are polygamists: they can marry as many wives as their means allow. A marriage among them is contracted in this wise: The parents or relatives select the future wife from among the female friends of the family, those friends may be either Aka or Miji, for Mijis and Hrusso intermarry. On the day appointed for the wedding, the services of the Deori are again called into requisition; partly with a view to obtain the favour of the gods, but chiefly, I guess, in order to provide an abundance of meat for the hundreds of guests who are to partake of the marriage-feast, and for whom great numbers of mithuns, cows, goats and fowls have to be killed. The festivity, *i. e.* the eating and drinking—for the Akas, like all hill-people indulge in ardent spirits—are to last at least five days and nights uninterruptedly.

The nuptials having thus been duly initiated, the bride and bridegroom are placed by the Deori beneath the canopy, formed of a piece of cloth spread out over them, he then winds another piece of cloth round both, thereby indicating their union, and this ceremony over, they are declared to be man and wife.

At the birth of a child, again sacrifices are brought, but no distinction is made between the sexes: a girl is considered as much a blessing as a boy; the murder of female infants, therefore, is fortunately not known amongst them, although they welcome the birth of a son with the same degree of joy, with which such an event is hailed among far more civilized nations.

In like manner are the gods to be propitiated when the ground is hoed and the seed sown, and also at harvest-time.

Seasons of sickness too require the services of the Deori, for the Aka is not in the habit of resorting to medicines of any kind to effect a cure. If a Hrusso falls ill, fowls &c. are offered to *Fuxu*, and the patient is mesmerised; but should this prove unavailing, matters are left to the good pleasure of *Fuxu* alone.

The dead among the Akas are not burnt, but buried. A grave is dug four to five feet deep and the body reverently deposited therein. Then a share of all his valuables is placed by the side of the dead, including his spear, bow and arrows. Next a platform is raised over the body to keep the earth from falling upon it, and finally the grave is filled in and over it a small stockade of bamboos and sticks erected,

and—Hindu fashion—a piece of cloth is spread out over the whole.

The Aka, although given to loot and robbery, is yet no idler : he is a great agriculturist. Unlike the Butias, the Akas import no grain from Assam, but subsist on the fruits of their own labour. They cultivate the fine plateaux on the backs of their broad hills, and some of those smiling valleys that stretch themselves out between their hills, miles in length and width.

They hoe the ground and beat the surface fine ; then pierce holes with a pointed stick, and drop into each hole 3 to 4 grains of rice (dhan). Their rice-crops they declare to be as good as, if not superior to those of the best parts of Assam. Beside the common kinds of rice, they cultivate a kind of grain, called *Dafla-dhan*, of a small size but growing in numerous clusters ; it is a grain, in fact, resembling millet. Also vegetables of the same description as those which are found in Assam, and pulses of various kinds are cultivated by the Akas.

There are, however, neither cotton, nor hemp and flax-plantations, to be met with ; the only fibre used by them and the Mijis, as well as all the other hill-tribes, is that derived from the rind of a tree known in Assam by the name of *Odal*, and used for nets and ropes. The consequence is, that the women of the Akas neither spin nor weave, but rely for their cotton cloth on the plains, as already mentioned. Nor do they breed the silkworms known to the Assamese. Though they covet the *Eria Bor-Kapors* of Assam, and the finer silk dhuties, yet they have never taken the trouble of introducing the silkworm into their hills.

The Akas keep large flocks of mithuns or mithans, and cows—their flesh is eaten, but the milk of mithuns, cows and goats they never touch. They breed pigs and rear fowls and pigeons in great numbers, but geese and ducks are forbidden to them by the gods.

The Hrusso pride themselves on being better feeders than any of the other hill-men. They eat the food of civilized people ; never touch the flesh of dogs, or elephants, or other objectionable animals. They indulge in the use of opium and tobacco—in fact, the pipe seldom leaves the mouth of an *Angka* man or woman. Such a pipe is generally a bit of bamboo with a reed inserted into it at a right angle. Now and then, however, Tibetan pipes of composition metal

may be seen in use amongst them. They likewise chew betel which they obtain in the plains, but tea as a beverage is not in use among them, although they keep up a constant intercourse with their Butan neighbours. The well-known ardent drink however—a species of beer, called Mod—prepared by all the aborigines of Assam and its frontier hills, the Akas too drink to excess.

The dress of the Angka has nothing national, or nothing that could distinguish them from other hill-men that border on Assam, except the profusion of Eria cloth wound round their bodies in all manner of ways, and a kind of half-trousers which consist in a piece of Eria cloth tied in such a fashion beneath the knee, as to allow the fringes to hang down over the ankles. When they move, the ample folds of this kind of legging, keep swinging and flying about their feet, and thus this piece of garment seems to answer admirably the purpose for which it is intended, namely to keep off the leeches and stinging insects, such as the musquitoes and the dum-dam.

As a head-dress the Aka often wears a kind of ring-cap or crown made of cane, three inches high with one or two tall feathers in front. However the felt-caps of the Butias are as commonly met with, while those who claim the rank of a raja sport rings or crowns such as those alluded to, only made of thin wood instead of cane, and covered with embossed silver. Tagi himself, however, never appears in the plains without his Tibetan hat of japanned wood of a bright yellow with a glass-knob on top, and a blue silk damask robe of state, of Chinese manufacture, but rather faded. All are fond of beads, and they wear them in profusion. Thus dressed up, they appear on state occasions only, the long sword at their side, and one or two minor weapons for cutting besides. When at home, the Aka looks more the savage, and dispenses with most of his garments. But winter is severe, and then he appreciates the neighbourhood of Assam, and the cloth of the rayats of Balipara.

In appearance, the Angka bears the same family-likeness with the other Turanian hill-tribes; he is a well-made and strongly built man, with more of daring and defiance in his look than the Dafla or even the Naga.

He is ignorant of the art of reading and writing, and though he covets the productions of art which Assam and Butan supply,

<i>English.</i>		<i>Hrusso or Angka.</i>	
four,	pferi.
five,	pfumu.
six,	ri.
seven,	'mue.
eight,	'xi or ksi.
nine,	sthö.
ten,	erh or 'rr.
twenty,	b'sha.
fifty,	serre.
hundred,	purrua.
I,	'nyo or no.
of me,	nathi or nadci.
we,	ni.
of us,	nithi.
thou,	ba.
of thee,	bathi.
you,	jö or jöe.
of you,	bathi.
he,	phö or pfö.
of him,	öthi.
they,	b'góna.
of them,	b'gónathi.
hand,	gsi.
foot,	'ssi.
nose,	nüsü.
eye,	ni.
mouth,	'nsu.
tooth,	thu.
ear,	phu or pfu,
hair,	kechü.
head,	khie.
tongue,	jabla.
belly,	negujü.
back,	subúe.
iron,	'ssä.
gold,	shü.

	<i>English.</i>				<i>Hrusso or Angku.</i>
silver,	lümmä.
Father,	áu.
Mother,	áni.
Brother,	'nyu.
Sister,	nümi.
man,	nüna.
woman,	pfümi.
wife,	gsi.
child,	angasa.
son,	sau.
daughter,	sami.
slave,	khla.
cultivator,	viddóu.
shepherd,	füdsusuen.
god,	shemüzü.
sun,	dsu.
moon,	xubie.
star,	litsie.
fire,	mi.
water,	xu.
house,	'nie.
horse,	fugra.
cow,	fuluxu.
dog,	sülö.
cat,	ashasa.
cock,	damrou,
duck,	ossa.
ass,	fub-abu.
bird,	düö.
go,	khabue.
eat,	chaue or tsanue.
sit,	riue or röue.
come,	agekhaue.
beat,	güga.
stand,	güdzülue.
die,	büdzibi or büjibi.

	<i>English.</i>			<i>Hrusso or Angka.</i>	
give,	dziba or jiba.
run,	godzoe or godzue.
up,	rafu.
down,	range.
near,	enisa.
far,	aniera.
before,	avva.
behind,	fumu.
who,	aninashe.
what,	}	hando.
why,		
and,	}	hamso.
but,		
if,	soio.
yes,	ö.
no,	ma.
alas!	ah! ah! kinia! dunia!
father,	áu.
of a father,	authi.
to a father,	au.
from a father,...	audin.
fathers,	auangie.
of fathers,	auangithi.
to fathers,	auangie.
from fathers,...	auangidin.
a daughter,	sami.
of a daughter,	samithi.
to a daughter,	sami.
from a daughter,	samidin.
daughters,	samiangie.
of daughters,...	samiangithi.
to daughters,	samiangie.
from daughters,	samiangidin.
a good man,	nünauh.
a good woman,	fümiuh.
a bad boy,	angasa mikzi.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Hrusso or Angka.</i>
a bad girl,	nimie mikzi.
good,	uh.
better,	angie uh.
high,	liujue.
higher,	angie linjue.
horse,	fugra.
mare,	emini.
horses,	fugra angie.
mares,	emini angie.
bull,	ombu.
bulls,	ombu angie.
cow,	fullu.
cows,	fullu angie.
dog,	sülö.
bitch,	sülö angie.
he-goat,	kissiglo.
she-goat,	kissiemie.
deer,	shu.
I am,	na éidu.
thou art,	ba du.
he is,	i or fö dua.
we are,	ni éidu.
you are,	jö or ze du.
they are,	nadu.
I was,	na dusö.
thou wast,	ba duso.
he was,	i or fö duso.
we were,	ni duso.
you were,	jö or ze duso.
they were,	na duso.
be,	adaue.
I may, } I shall, } be, I should, }	na danie.
beat,	gue.
I beat,	na gümbi.

<i>English.</i>				<i>Hrusso or Angka.</i>
thou beatest,...	...	...	...	ba gümbi.
he beats,	...	...	...	i or fö gümbi.
we beat,	...	...	...	ni gümbi.
you beat,	...	...	...	jö or ze gü.
they beat,	...	...	...	na gü.
I may,	} beat,	...	...	na günie.
I shall,				
I should,				
I am,	} beaten,	...	...	na güda.
I was,				
I shall be,				
I go,	...	...	...	na khanie.
thou goest,	...	...	...	ba khanie.
he goes,	...	...	...	i or fö khanie.
we go,	...	...	...	ni khanie.
you go,...	...	...	...	jö or ze khanie.
they go,	...	...	...	na khanie.
I went,...	...	...	...	na khabse.
thou do,	...	...	...	ba khabse.
he do, ...	...	...	...	i or fö khabse.
we do, ...	...	...	...	ni khabse.
you do,	...	...	...	jö or ze khabse.
they do,	...	...	...	na khabse.
What is your name?	...	...	...	Banini hathi aue?
How old is this horse?	...	...	...	Fugra-oddia khiniavo?
How many sons are there in your father's house? ..	...	...	...	Bo iniase isa kinia duvo?
The son of my uncle is married to her sister,...	...	...	...	Avoessaueniu enümi ksidani.
How far is it from here to Kashmir?	...	...	...	Aio bege Kashmir khímia radavo?
I have walked a long way to-day,	...	...	...	'Yo angiera dim doui.
In the house is the saddle of the white horse, ...	...	...	...	Fugra gro dsimie duma nie.
Put the saddle upon his back, ...	...	...	...	Dsimie niva.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Hrusso or Angka.</i>
He is grazing cattle on the top of the hill, 	Semifu khakus, done fu.
He is sitting on a horse under that tree, 	Shöni elo fugra idsuze nuna röda.
His brother is taller than his sister,	Enümise eama pshüfada.
The price of that is two rupees and a half, 	Tokar pükse adulia.

ON THE BIRDS OF THE GOONA DISTRICT; by GEORGE KING, M. B.,
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Goona is a small station in Central India on the Agra and Bombay mail road, 200 miles south of Agra. It is situated in the territory of H. H. the Maharajah of Gwalior, and in a very thinly populated and comparatively little known part of the country. Having been attached from the months of March to December of the past year, to one of the regiments of Central India Horse stationed there, I took the opportunity of noting the birds of the surrounding district, thinking that a list of them might have some interest with respect to the geographical distribution of species. Not having remained a full year in Goona, the list subjoined is necessarily incomplete in respect of some of the migratory species, especially of water-fowl and waders, and I feel sure that an observer resident there for several years, would be able to add the names of many occasional visitants and *very* local species.

Every care has been taken in the identification of the species given, and the names of none have been inserted on hearsay. I have the authority of the sportsmen of the station for believing that the names of Red Spur-fowl, the Indian Bustard, the Golden Plover, the Kulan, the European Bittern, and the Barred-headed Goose, might have been added, as occasionally occurring in the district, but not having myself shot or seen specimens, I have excluded them. The book chiefly used in identifying the species has been Dr. Jerdon's admirable